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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

September 25, 2019

Mr. Glenn Fine
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense
Office of Inspector General
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Mr. Fine:

We write to request a review of Department of Defense (DoD) Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative funding appropriated by Congress, which was halted for a significant portion of calendar year 2019 by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), allegedly at the direction of the White House.

The delay would appear to have hindered the Department's statutory obligation to provide security assistance to Ukraine at a critical moment, and raises serious questions about whether DoD officials were involved in any scheme to target a political opponent. As a result, it is imperative that your office pursue a thorough review of DoD's potential role in these allegations, and provide your findings to the congressional defense committees in a timely manner.

Congress strongly supports the U.S.-Ukraine partnership, and has provided significant sums through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative in support of this objective. The Committee has exercised continuous oversight over these funds every year. On February 28, 2019, the congressional defense committees were notified by the Department of the intent to provide \$125 million of the fiscal year 2019 Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative funding. On May 23, 2019, the Department further notified the defense committees of the intent to provide the remaining \$125 million in funds appropriated for this purpose. Taken together, these notifications clearly indicated that up until at least May 23, the Department was on-track to provide this assistance to Ukraine in a timely manner.

However, for reasons unknown, this progress slowed over the summer, and by mid-August, the congressional defense committees were notified that no funds had been executed due to inexplicable, unspecified delays. Shortly thereafter, press reports indicated that the funds were being held up by OMB at the direction of the White House. The Department confirmed this report to staff on August 29, but did not provide any explanation for the delay. According to press reports, these delays appear to be occasioned by the President's desire to pressure Ukraine into working with his personal attorney to investigate a potential political opponent and his

family. Meanwhile, press reports also indicated that the Department of Defense had reviewed the proposed aid package to Ukraine and supported it.

As part of your investigation, I request that you provide answers to the following questions:

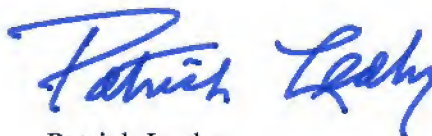
- 1) Why did the Department of Defense fail to execute funding for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative in a timely manner, consistent with the February and May notifications to Congress?
- 2) Was the Department directed to slow or halt its work to spend the funds, and was the Department prohibited from communicating this to Congress? At whose direction?
- 3) Was it the understanding of anyone in the Department that the request to halt Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative funds was connected to a political consideration by the President and his senior staff?
- 4) Did anyone in the Department report any concerns related to this matter to your office, and if so, what was the substance of such reports?
- 5) When was the Department told that OMB had released its hold, and was it told why the hold was released at that time?

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
Vice Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense



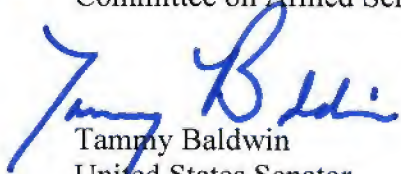
Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations



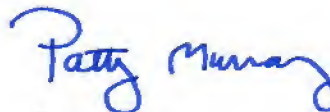
Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services



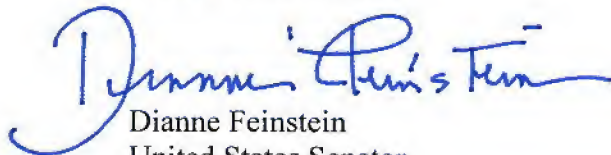
Tom Udall
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Mark Esper, Secretary of Defense